12 October 2015 - Met Office research reveals the impact of weather on the UK retail industry

Almost half of UK retailers and suppliers (47 %) rank the weather as one of the top three external factors driving consumer demand according to new research released by the Met Office today. However, a third (32 %) do not use any weather data within their supply chain and 17 % rely on free weather data services.

The new research looked at those who are currently using paid-for commercial weather services, and found that 62 % of respondents were able to offer better customer service, 57 % reported improved accuracy in their sales forecasts, 51 % had better on-shelf availability and 43 % reduced waste - all key priorities for supply chains.

The report also found that two-thirds (67 %) of retailers think forecasting consumer demand has become harder, although there is a clear desire from supply chains to use weather forecasts more broadly within their businesses, particularly to drive commercial benefits- for example through forecasting footfall and online traffic, and planning marketing campaigns.

Barbara Napiorkowska-Dickson, Met Office Retail Business Manager said: "The UK's changeable weather means that it can have a significant impact on retail performance and retailers' abilities to meet customer demands - for example ensuring they stock the right products for both good and adverse weather. If they miscalculate this, retailers risk losing millions through incorrect stock levels and disappointed customers. It can also impact the costs and efficiencies of the whole supply chain."

In order to better understand the impact of the weather on shopper behaviour and supply chains, the Met Office spoke to IGD, a research and training body providing a wealth of information and best practice on the consumer goods industry worldwide. The Met Office has combined IGD's research findings with its own research - which included speaking directly to senior supply chain experts - to draw out valuable insights and implications for the role of weather products in the industry.

The report has been shaped by the views of over 200 senior managers across more than 80 companies and looked at understanding how they currently use weather products and data, how they plan to do so in the future and the impact of weather on their supply chain.

To see all of the research findings you can download the full report 'Understanding the role of weather in the supply chain' from the Met Office website.

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